

Messenger

St. Mary of the Assumption
Roman Catholic Church

Spring 2020
Volume 11 No. 1

A New Commitment In 2020

As the New Year 2020 began, parishioners at St. Mary's were asked to consider increasing their weekly offering to the parish, to help address an operating deficit of \$178,408.87, as reported in the 2019 Annual Report.

If each of the 750 families who regularly contribute to the parish were to increase their weekly offerings by \$4.57, this deficit would be eliminated. As of *Messenger* deadline, increased contributions and commitments continued to come in. Thank you to all who have increased their offerings to date. If you would still like to do so, please call the Rectory at (716) 683-6445.

If you are not already participating or familiar with giving through St. Mary's Commitment to Parish Life (CPL) program, you may also want to consider this option.

Thank you again for supporting St. Mary's into the future.



From the Pastor ... Our Great Belief

The centering mystery of our Christian faith rests in the Resurrection of Jesus. In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul holds that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, then our faith is in vain. We believe that Jesus' Resurrection gives purpose and meaning to our lives, helping us to be persons pursuing justice, forgiveness and peace. The Easter season – 50 special days, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday – invites us to reflect and celebrate a bit more attentively the power and giftedness of Jesus' Resurrection.

We can never fully appreciate Jesus' Resurrection and its significance for us, but may I suggest two ways of looking at the Resurrection?

Some New Testament writers state that Jesus was raised from the dead by God, while others say He rose from the dead on His own. In both cases, God is at work, but the emphasis shifts depending on the position described.

The Christian creed states that Jesus "descended into hell." This phrase teaches us that Jesus truly died. "Hell" in the language of the creed indicates "the place of the dead," not the place as later thinking developed as "the place of the damned." So, Jesus dies, but rises from the place of the dead. Here again is an interesting difference of perspective. Some artists depicting Jesus' Resurrection portray Him as rising alone in glory, often surrounded by adoring angels and towering over creation in splendor. This represents a Western Christian perspective. Other artists see Jesus escorting numerous persons with Him as He rises in glory. Here is reflected an Eastern Christian belief.

Points of emphasis, each important, and each strengthening and challenging us to grow in our faith life. A recent TV program is entitled *All Rise!* It refers to a court gesture. May we "rise" with Him! Have a wonderful, thoughtful Easter season!

- Fr. Paul



Prayer for the Selection of a New Bishop

Merciful Father,
 You gave us shepherds as successors of the apostles to guide and govern Your Church.
 We implore Your Holy Spirit to guide the selection process as a new bishop is chosen to lead our diocese.
 May he be a pastor filled with holiness and compassion who will foster healing and a greater love of Your name.
 Allow our hearts to be open to the candidate of Your choosing so that, together as disciples of



Jesus,
 we may continue to build Your kingdom.
 Amen.

Support St. Mary's While You Shop

Support St. Mary's parish and school while you shop by purchasing Scrip gift cards.

Scrip enables you to buy gift cards from local and national vendors, with a percentage of every purchase coming back to St. Mary's. There are no added fees.

You can purchase Scrip at the Rectory on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or online at shopwithscrip.com. For more information, please call (716) 683-6445, ext. 10 or email scrip@smeschool.com.

Lenten Regional Penance Services

Thursday, March 26 - 3 p.m. & 7 p.m.
 St. Martha Church, 10 French Road, Depew, NY 14043

Lancaster-Depew Ministerium Ecumenical Services and Lenten Soup Suppers are ongoing through the first week of April. Ecumenical Services take place on Wednesdays at 12 noon. (Mass is celebrated at St. Mary's at 11 a.m. on these days.) Lenten Soup Suppers begin at 6 p.m. on Fridays, preceding Stations of the Cross.

For more information, please call the Rectory at (716) 683-6445 or visit stmarysonthehill.com.

Holy Week & Easter at St. Mary's

Palm Sunday Masses

Saturday, April 4 - 4:30 & 7 p.m. (Church)
 Sunday, April 5 - 8 a.m., 10 a.m. & 12 noon (Church)

Tenebrae Service

Tuesday, April 7 - 7:45 p.m. (Church)

Holy Thursday - April 9

Community Morning Prayer - 9 a.m. (Chapel)
 Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper - 7 p.m. (Church)
 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament - 8:30 to 11 p.m. (Chapel)

Good Friday - Passion of the Lord - April 10

Community Morning Prayer - 9 a.m. (Chapel)
 Commemoration of the Lord's Passion - 3 p.m. (Church)
 Stations of the Cross - 7 p.m. (Parish Center)

Holy Saturday - April 11

Community Morning Prayer - 9 a.m. (Chapel)
 Blessing of Easter Baskets - 12 noon (Church)
 Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter - 8 p.m. (Church)

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection - April 12

Sunrise Mass - 6:30 a.m. (Westwood Park)
 Masses - 8 a.m., 10 a.m. & 12 noon (Church)

Easter Bunny Brunch

Saturday, April 11 - 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. - Parish Center
Registration is limited.
 Call (716) 683-6445.

Mark Your Calendar!
St. Mary's of Lancaster

5th Annual

MEGA RAFFLE

\$25,000 Grand Prize

\$100
PER TICKET

LIVE DRAWING ON FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020

Doors open at 6 PM - Grand Prize drawing at 10 PM

Ticket includes admission for 2 adults (aged 21+), pizza and all beverages.

No outside beverages allowed

****ONLY 700 TICKETS SOLD** 450 MUST BE SOLD BEFORE 5/31/20 OR REFUNDS WILL BE ISSUED**

28 Total Prizes Awarded

EARLY BIRD DRAWINGS COMING UP!

\$150 on 4/1/20 & \$100 on 5/1/20

Event Drawings

1 - \$1,000 prize / 2 - \$500 prizes / 2 - \$250 prizes / 4 - \$150 prizes / 15 - \$100 prizes

\$25,000 Grand Prize

CALL (716) 253-7880 FOR MORE INFORMATION

Support Our Church Environment

We're all becoming increasingly aware of our environment and how to best care for and preserve it. When it comes to our Church environment, the St. Mary's Liturgical Environment Ministry could use your help.

Preparations will be under way soon to purchase plants for the Easter season and spring. The Liturgical Environment Ministry decorates the Church to reflect the liturgical seasons, as well as maintaining Church plants. Because the Easter season lasts for 50 days, these plants need to be changed more than once. Fabrics, greenery and other items also need to be purchased.

If you can make a donation, please place it in an envelope marked "Liturgical Ministry" and place it in the collection basket at Mass, or drop it off or mail it to the Rectory (1 St. Mary's Hill, Lancaster NY, 14086). Every little bit helps!

If you're interested in volunteering for the Liturgical Environment Ministry, please contact Elaine Driscoll at (716) 683-8611 or edristoj@aol.com. Ministry works includes crafting, sewing, building, painting and floral arranging, as well as simply sharing your creative ideas or your green thumb. Some of the work can be done at home, at your convenience. Meetings are held periodically, but attendance is not mandatory.

Thank you for your support!

Looking Back: "True Love Tales"



The photo above appeared in a recent issue of Reminisce.com magazine as part of a feature on "true love tales." The couple met as childhood sweethearts - and were married at St. Mary's in 1928. The photo was submitted to Reminisce.com by their daughter, a resident of Reno, NV.

Response to Love



Members of the St. Mary's Junior Ladies of Charity (JLOC) volunteered recently at the Response to Love Center, Buffalo, where they sorted hundreds of cans of donated goods to stock the food pantry. To learn more about the Junior Ladies of Charity, please call (716) 681-2957 or visit stmarysonthehill.org/junior-ladies-of-charity/.

A Special Thank You



St. Mary's would like to extend special thanks to May's Tree & Stump Removal for their assistance with numerous tree trimming and removal projects in recent weeks near the Church, Rectory and elsewhere on parish property. The generosity of our friends and parishioners is always appreciated as we keep up with ongoing maintenance issues here at St. Mary's.

St. John of God

By Barb Owczarczak, Pastoral Minister

John of God was born João Duarte Cidade in 1495 in Portugal. He was born into an impoverished but religiously devoted family. From an early age, he followed his heart, which was not always being guided by the Holy Spirit. At the age of eight, he left home in the company of a cleric his family had hosted for a while. They travelled from village to village, begging for sustenance, until John fell sick. He came under the care of a wealthy landowner, who hired him as a shepherd. Over time, the landowner came to respect John and desired for him to marry his daughter and inherit his property. But John only loved the girl as he would a sister, so he ran off, joining the Spanish army in its war against France.

John's life as a soldier was the opposite of holy - spent gambling, drinking and pillaging with his comrades. Stories vary as to what occurred to cause a change of heart. Some say that he had a fall from a horse, others that he was set up by his comrades. What is known is that John was arrested for theft and sentenced to death. Although he was rescued from the hangman, he was beaten and stripped before his discharge from the army.

John tried to head for Africa to become a martyr and help free captive Christians - but was advised that such action would not be spiritually based. It was then that St. John of Avila visited him, suggesting that a life of service to others was better than solely enduring personal hard-



ships. So, John established a house where he tended to the needs of the sick and poor.

Because of his prayer life and selfless actions, others joined John in his ministry. The group evolved into the Brothers Hospitallers, approved by the Holy See in 1572 as the Brothers Hospitallers of Saint John of God, who care for the sick in countries around the world. A mark of honor to John's labors is that this Order is officially entrusted with the medical care of the pope.

The Order maintains a presence in 53 countries, operating more than 300 hospitals, services and centers offering a wide range of medical needs. The Family of Saint John of God, as those who commit to his vision are called, is made up of more than 45,000 members, brothers and workers. Supporting them are tens of thousands of benefactors and friends.

St. John of God is the patron saint of hospitals, the sick, nurses, firefighters, alcoholics, and booksellers. His feast day is March 8.

Love Begins at Mother Teresa Home

"Love begins at home – and it is not how much we do ... but how much love we put in that action."

So said Mother Teresa of Calcutta in December 1979 as she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work with the poor. Mother Teresa died in 1997 and was canonized as St. Teresa of Calcutta in 2016. Here in Western New York, her legacy lives on in numerous ways, including Mother Teresa Home, located at 208 Stanislaus Street in Buffalo.

Sponsored by the Diocese of Buffalo Office of Pro-Life Activities, the Mother Teresa Home supports young, homeless pregnant women and those between the ages of 16 and 26 who are parenting dependent children. Locally and throughout the United States, these descriptions fit thousands who run away or are asked to leave their homes and are left without such basic necessities as food, shelter, health care or educational resources. The mission of Mother Teresa Home is to promote their safety, stability and well-being.

Services offered at Mother Teresa Home, either directly or by referral, include:

- Living accommodations.
- Life-skill building: consumer education and instruction in budgeting,

using credit, housekeeping, planning menus, preparing food and parenting.

- Interpersonal skill building: establishing better relationships with peers and adults, making decisions, and managing stress.
- Educational opportunities: GED preparation and postsecondary and vocational training.
- Assistance in job preparation and placement.
- Substance abuse prevention and reduction.
- Mental health counseling.
- Physical health care.
- Resources to identify reliable, affordable child care.

Dedicated in 2016, Mother Teresa Home was designated as an "institutional expression of mercy" at the suggestion of Pope Francis during the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

For more information, email ProLifeoffice@buffalodiocese.org or visit buffalodiocese.org/mother-teresa-home.



Upon This Rock Update

Thank you to all who contribute to Upon This Rock, the ongoing Buffalo Diocese campaign to strengthen parishes and provide enhanced pastoral care and outreach.

Since 2016, Upon This Rock funds raised have covered the cost of numerous projects at St. Mary's. These have included a new Rectory roof, a new truck for work at the cemetery and on other parish grounds, and a portion of the restoration of our stained glass windows. The window project was completed in 2018.

St. Mary's receives disbursements twice a year from the Upon This Rock foundation. Currently, additional funding is being banked for upcoming needs as they arise. Ours is one of 160 parishes that received Upon This Rock disbursements in 2019, totaling more than \$3.6 million.

Last year, Upon This Rock subsidized more than \$234,000 in STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, the arts and math) enhancements at Western New York's Catholic elementary schools, including St. Mary's.

Upon This Rock funding also benefits the Mother Teresa Home, which served 12 mothers and 14 children in 2019.

Upon This Rock Stewardship Highlights ...

- In 2019, 160 Western New York parishes, including St. Mary's, received disbursements totaling more than \$3.6 million to use on key projects.
- The Upon This Rock Foundation funded leadership development for area Catholic school principals to strengthen STREAM programming.

St. Mary's Parishioner Updates

During the months of November, December and January:

- *These new parishioners joined St. Mary's:* Samuel and Abena Boateng and family, Jennifer Beuchler and family, Gayashen Fernando and Kathy Ammari, Christopher and Anne Gabriele and family, Richard and Valerie Haug, Jerry Michalak, Nicholas Pfender, and David and Lindsey Thomas and family.

- Joseph Renowden and Katherine Mekelburg were married at our Church.

- *These children became members of our parish family through Baptism:* Cordelia Rose Kisiel-Haug, Harper Marie Kiliszek, Adley Irene Nicosia, Carter Tadeusz Niedzwiedz, Hadley Grace Charette, Bianca Rose Eger, Giovanni Robert Fairl, Chase William Ortman, Isabella Marie Zaffram, Andrew Samuel Canzoneri, IV, Joelle Christine Howard and Claire Grace Barton.

- *Funeral Masses were celebrated for these beloved souls called home to the Lord:* Helen J. Brown, Eugene G. Haas, Cathleen A. Bryan, Lorraine M. Stypa, Stella M. Ketchum, Antoinette B. Chirico, Joseph Maciejewski, Mabel Pionkowski, Rose Penska, Brian Meany, Gail M. Watson and Mary M. Barry.

Correction: In the last issue of Messenger, the names of one of our wedding couples were printed erroneously. The correct names are Daniel Bailey II and Sydney Blizzard. Our apologies!

Faith Formation in Action *Living as Missionary Disciples*



Pictured with Sr. Therese Chmura, CSSF, director of faith formation at St. Mary's, are, from left, Chase, Edward and Lee Smith.

Another Souper Bowl Weekend Success!

Participants in St. Mary's Family Faith Formation program collected more than \$1,200 and a generous supply of canned soup during this year's Souper Bowl Weekend drive on February 1 and 2. Benefiting from the proceeds were the Sr. Mary Josette Food Pantry, the Trinity Episcopal Church Food Pantry and Gerard Place, as well as other community members in need.

Take a Trip Around the World At This Year's Senior Prom

Families from St. Mary's Faith Formation program will once again host the parish's annual Senior Prom on Saturday, April 25 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Parish Center.

The theme of this year's prom is *Let's Take a Trip Around the World*. Seniors – singles, couples and families – are invited. Children are encouraged to bring their grandparents and great grandparents, and vice versa. Refreshments will be served, and there will be music, dancing, games, and a chance to relax, reminisce, and get to know one another. Attire is semi-formal or casual.

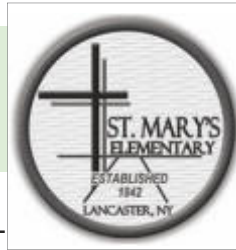
Please RSVP by Monday, April 20 by calling (716) 683-8564 or emailing therese@stmarysonthehill.org.

Remembering Your Deceased Loved Ones

As a special way to honor a deceased loved one, please consider having them remembered at a Mass in their name at St. Mary's.

A donation of \$15 is requested for Memorial Masses. You may select dates as they are available by stopping in or contacting the Rectory at (716) 683-6445. Rectory business hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through the end of May. During the summer months, business hours change to 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. Mary's Distinguished Graduate Award Presented



James (Jim) Over, a 1997 graduate of St. Mary's Elementary School, was the recipient of the 2020 SME Distinguished Graduate Award, presented on January 31, during Catholic Schools Week.



Kim Kwitowski, principal of St. Mary's Elementary School, presents the 2020 Distinguished Graduate Award to 1997 alumnus Jim Over.

The award is given each year to a former SME student who best exemplifies the school's values and morals: dedication, patience, generosity, dependability, and a strong

sense of commitment to family and faith.

As an SME student, Jim was involved in numerous sports and activities. He attended St. Mary's High School and Erie Community College. In 2003, he was hired as IT computer technician at SME. In this role, he introduced new hardware and software, bringing St. Mary's to a state-of-the-art platform.

For eight years, Jim served in the Lancaster Volunteer Fire Department. In 2012, he and his wife, Amy, were wed at St. Mary's. Their two children now attend SME.

As noted by SME Principal Kim Kwitowski, Jim "has continued SME's legacy of good and strong morals and values. ... He is friendly to all, cooperative to all, and always willing to help when and where needed, with a smile and a humble attitude. He continues his journey with us, caring and giving to and for others."

New This Year: Summer Camp at SME!

St. Mary's Elementary School is now offering Summer Camp from mid-June through the end of August, for children in preschool through 8th grade. Summer Camp will be held five days a week from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with flexible scheduling allowed. Cost is \$40 a day and includes a light breakfast and two snacks. Included in camp curriculum will be art, science, technology, creative movement, group time, center free play, and outdoor play time. Field trips will also be scheduled.

For more information, please call (716) 683-2112 or visit smeschool.com.

Be Part of St. Mary's Social Media Community



St. Mary's Parish has a vibrant and growing social media presence. Please join our social media community and be a part of our ongoing communications!

- Visit our parish website at stmarysonthehill.com and school website at smeschool.com.
- Download our free parish app on your Smartphone. Search for "St. Mary of the Assumption" in the Apple and Android stores. Or, go to www.parishsolutions.com/assumption.
- Like us on Facebook.
- Follow the parish on Twitter: @stmarys716.

If you see a post or tweet that resonates with you, help spread the word by sharing it with your own friends and followers.

Utilize the St. Mary's app for bulletins, newsletters, a Bible, prayers, websites, the Rosary, music and many other resources - right at your fingertips. There's no easier way to stay in touch with all you need to know about what's happening at St. Mary's.



St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church
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www.stmarysonthehill.com

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John Owczarczak, Permanent Deacon
Diane Zwirecki, APR, Editor
Ray Milkowski, Sr., Photographer



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St. Mary's Mass Schedule

Daily Masses:

8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday (School Chapel)
12 Noon Monday, Wednesday, Friday (School Chapel)

*During the school year, there is also an 8:30 a.m. Mass on Fridays in the Church.
Please call the Rectory or visit the website for holy day information.*

Weekend Masses:

Saturday
4:30 p.m.
7 p.m.

Sunday
8 a.m.
10 a.m.
12 Noon

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession):

Saturday 3:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
*Appointments can be made for the Sacrament
by calling the Rectory at 683-6445.*